

**Tourism Workforce Assessment Forum
Mesa Community College
June 16, 2005**

Discussion Topic 1

What non-traditional strategies do you use to recruit entry-level employees?

- We've utilized the bulletin boards at community colleges; it has been effective—cost effective
- Our most effective for recruiting line employees is through referrals, families, friends; they get \$100 per person. And those people stay in the position the longest
- We've used job banks, industry assoc job services
- We tried using our web site for advertising job opportunities, it didn't work well, but we posted to our site
- Our front line employees if they had a basic understanding of communication that would be a major help. We're passing people through the system who can't communicate effectively
- Recently, I was laid off. I went to Maricopa workforce connections in Gilbert paid for by county and US DOL. They are throughout the valley. The Gilbert center is used as a model

What non-traditional strategies do you use to recruit entry-level employees?

- Online, it's non-traditional because we never did it before, but now it's a requirement, especially on the management side of structure. Like Jobbing, HRCareers, Monster, etc.
- Word of mouth, networking, if you get the word out it spreads quickly and you never have to advertise it. Spread it to people within the industry, all sorts of networks
- Through associations, they generally have a pool of people
- Job banks with different organizations. It opens it up to all members and word of mouth is still the most successful and economical
- It's extremely expensive to use the newspapers. The response wasn't there for the money
- I bought a package where they go online, and 95% of responses are from the online ad from the Republic
- I prefer to use the Tribune than the paper in Phoenix (big difference in price). Problem with quality [of people]

Besides wages, what factors contribute to employee turnover?

- Their supervisor is probably the biggest issue, lack of communication, and the feeling that they aren't important
- The opportunity for advancement is a big factor, and that is why we see so much turnover
- Hours and scheduling
- Community colleges are effective for that, because of schedules and flexibility.
- Once you get degree, you decide to go. Many graduate and go
- Benefits
- It's also because they get a better opportunity—more responsibility and growth and they can do new things, more challenges, etc.
- Rounding about their careers getting new exposure
- What about recognition or lack of it, people will go if they are not recognized for their hard work, not just a warm fuzzy
- Both formal and informal recognition
- People have different needs. It's communication and knowing and understanding your workforce
- The informal recognition will go a long way

- Lack of education and compensation for that. We put people in a job and expect them to stay there forever, lots of people want to move ahead, not just stay still

What are you doing/could you do to attract young people to consider a career in the tourism industry?

- Tuition reimbursement, the hotel will pay for classes if they do C or better
- Presentations made in classes, if they see people from hospitality industry or a student day at hotel or restaurant and see what it's like to work in that industry
- I go to junior high and high school career days. It seems like a lot of students don't care about career day
- At museums we get some youth group volunteers and this helps
- Currently there is a program out of greater Phoenix CVB, high school mentorship program...working with certain high schools and exposing kids to different facets of the industry. Taking them to aviation and other tourism areas, catering hospitality, we haven't had a way to track these students to see how it affected them. We're now expanding this to ASU, if they do well, we'll pick up a semester of tuition. We'll be connecting them with players in the industry. On the interim, employers have an opportunity to get employees. We screen the students, letters of recommendation wanted...to promote multi-ethnicity. They had requirements in order to be rewarded
- Perception that no one makes good money. The most visible positions

How are you preparing employees for advancement in your organization?

- Give them training, whatever skills they need to climb the ladder
- Encouraging staff and putting resources behind it
- We have a tenured mgmt team, it looks like you can't go up and the encouragement isn't there. I'm trying to work with management team to motivate them to grow
- Is anyone cross-training?
- We do a lot of cross-training but everyone has a home dept, and when they
- RV association () a program of education for conventions, there are classes to help with certification and such. It covers everything from financing customer service, maintenance, the problem is it's under-utilized
- One way to prep employees is to prepare them for exposure in public places. Perhaps sending an employee in my place so that they have an opportunity to be visible in front of constituents

Are there jobs that a guest worker?

- Yes
- Depends on what their language skills are
- Our housekeeping dept among others that would definitely—utility dishwashers, cooks, landscaping
- Routine maintenance jobs
- The reality is we have them. I've built facilities for people to take care of them; I don't care if they don't know English. I'm grateful they are here
- It's not seasonal; we can't assume they will go home. That's not the case
- We need to have bilingual people on staff to be able to work with these people
- Keep politics out
- As an employer, we're required to make sure our employees are legal. They bring false documents and we can't hire them but we're condemned because we're not taking people into the workplace. It's difficult to have to screen, we shouldn't have to
- Transportation issues, housing issues, etc. depends

Discussion Topic 2

How do changing travel preferences affect your workforce and training needs?

- The museum is going to have a tremendous impact, because people that come have time and money to spend. It means we've got a greatly increased volunteer group and a lot more people visiting. A major opportunity for 200 museums in Arizona
- Quality lifestyle magazine, Ken Deischwalt, agepower.com and it talks about this issue. Talks about demographics ahead. It will benefit everyone here
- Customer service bar has to be raised. We have ambassadors on the streets and there are customer service requirements
- Aging group, it's easier for people to work who are over 55. If we could use their skills more effectively...
- Work ethic is different, more reliable people
- As the population ages, the tolerance is less acceptable
- The older the clientele, the more they expect from frontline employees

What other social trends...

- No body should be allowed to say "No Problem!" No one says thank you anymore. Better front line service
- I work out of the Phoenician and different people would get even half of what they do. All employees go through 3 days of customer service training
- The biggest growth of hotels is smaller hotels. Franchisers are saying they don't even have to train employees
- Is there an opportunity to change that mindset?
- The other end of that spectrum, if you look at management, the biggest growth is limited service. How much that affects other hospitality related areas, I don't know. But the industry is saying that it's not necessary
- It's an issue of leadership
- With respect to customer service, it's essential to identify people with good customer service by their actions. Other industries and based on the recognition they could figure out the best employees. A lot of these organizations are looking at computerization

What new jobs are emerging in your company or industry?

- The comment on quality is infectious by ownership/management. I have a GM who picks up trash. I had to take people to their rooms and couldn't take a tip.
- A lot of this is our responsibility; we need to find new innovative ways to service our customers. In RV / campground, in Las Vegas, there's a luxury RV park, with a bartender that services people
- As a result of prop 200, people are looking to boycott our state. We can expect that more people to affect us through industry
- It's an ongoing thing in the last 20 years I've been here
- The nonprofessional sector needs to market what an impact we have on Arizona. The arts community has a major impact on tourism on the state. Or we need to remind politicians about it.

Over the next five years, what jobs and job skills areas are being phased out from your company or industry?

- Call centers
- I carry all of my own bags on wheels

- Kiosks for self check-in
- Loss of travel agents, but they've been on that list for a while
- Business centers are increasing; every one of our guests had a cell phone
- Tech has tremendously changed our industry. When our hotels were built technology was not considered, so we are dealing with tech. issues

Aging of workforce?

- Travel preference: we are changing our structure of our buildings. Ex. Conference centers need to have internet so we're dealing with these issues
- In the valley we are catering to winter visitors. Younger RVers are interested in a concierge to get basic information. We're catering like a hotel. More interaction
- You're looking at RV sites that are renting for \$100/night with hot tubs, internet and other services
- We'll need tech support people and software changes, etc.
- This all goes back to customer service. We lack that desperately!

What intergenerational issues affect your workforce?

- You can go too deep as far as the quality of our workforce, the depth in the sense of manners and attitude towards life. These kids just don't have a good attitude and lack of training for respect which leads to customer service. I feel more comfortable with having an older person work my front desk. They are comfortable with a keyboard and have that customer service work ethic.
- We need to start spanking in the 6th grade.
- When someone is hired usually they are given their job description and the emphasis isn't there to train in customer service. If they don't learn it where they were supposed to, then we need to train
- Does anyone use a mentoring program?
- Excellent idea, but in our industry, with what's available we find ourselves just filling slots. That's an aspect that could work
- Even in a questionnaire for, that individual should be given a test to see how they would handle certain situations
- We could have weeded the bad ones out with a rigorous in the interview process
- Give them a pickle; we have them go through small training, videos. We have challenges with older people and younger people. We have to train managers how to work with younger people
- Another aspect is we have older communities that don't allow families and younger people. A lot of baby boomers have young kids, so the winter visitor issue is evolving

Discussion Topic 3

What are you currently doing to train and update the skills of your employees?

- I've been waiting for this question! We seem to have the resources, as a manager, to train myself, but that I have to keep my people working, and not training them. We need to train management to show them how it's cost effective to train our employees. It costs money for them to go
- People don't see value in training
- I don't want to train my people only for them to go
- I've been in tourism for 25 years, we do what we know. We have done OTJ training and it worked for us. But that doesn't mean we have to keep it this way

- One of our employees who wanted to improve her public speaking skills, and so we had her work with a private coach and then we had her work with toastmasters...
- Most provide financial reimbursement for training
- If the training applies to the job, we can reimburse for it up to \$500 per year
- We have options, but the motivation isn't there either.
- Most of the training costs a lot of money. We need seminars that are affordable and we don't have to spend thousands to get people trained
- We contracted signature training to provide outside training

What educational partnerships does your organization currently have, and how could these be improved?

- For 12 years, we've had a program where we will assist in schools and mentor and provide scholarships but I have found it difficult to keep the program going, but with cutbacks happen, they cut good programs that make a difference. The red tape—the rules of the academic world don't match the corporate rules. Frustrating cause we have the money and mentors, but the schools don't continue with the programs.
- HS programs problems is with the counselors and parents, perception that these jobs aren't good. AIMS has put greater emphasis on coursework but career and tech ed programs are being cut
- Teachers are retiring and there's no one who can pick up for them and transition

What needs do you or your customers have that you are unable to meet because your employees don't have the necessary skills?

- The ambassadors, for ex. learning how to dress, and regardless of the uniforms, they won't follow the dress code
- Attendance doesn't seem to be an issue to be punctual
- The right attitude
- I see it in mature team members, the younger ones have great computer skills, the tenured managers who don't conform as easily. But the younger ones don't have what really matters, like dressing conservatively
- I think part of it is really as the employer and leadership is setting expectations from the beginning and we need to be role models and either they get it or they don't. They need to be aware right up front

What can be done to help prepare younger members of the workforce to appropriately service the needs of your customers?

- Every time I go to a certain establishment and the individual is doing their best to service you and you can tell who's been trained and such. For years I've wondered if I should start a school for hospitality so that people can learn the skills and get the industry to go to them for employees. Kids are not adequately trained outside of the home
- It's up to the employer to be clear about expectations. No one expects to fail, but if they don't know what's expected of them, then they are likely to fail
- We have a large group of kids that don't want to go to college. If you don't go to college, where else do you go to give them the basic training
- A variety of colleges offer such programs and options. The problem is the perception and that's the industry's responsibility. This industry is seen as a transient employment

What can be done to help aging members of the workforce to appropriately service the needs of your customers?

- A little more computer training if they haven't had it before
- It's possible to have an outsource situation rather than ask them to go to community colleges, can we bring the classes in to them? With a group of 4 or 5 people, can we do that? Older people might be willing to do that
- Intergenerational training, talking about elder workers wanting to work PT, they don't have the computer skills, but a program called life options is being started to help seniors with lifelong learning programs, but the industry also has to contribute to this need. There are many options out there.
- More flexible hours, don't want to work the hours, or half days

How will technology affect your staff training and development?

- There should be a mix. We need a one-on-one
- You can't teach by asking, "Do you want fries with that", you need to know how to address people
- One outcome is that we build better programs, none of that will matter if we can't get people to the classes. If we could find creative ways to market these industries, get industry to drive people into the industry and technology is the key
- We keep coming back to the issue is that we can't get the enrollment. We have to work with legislature
- Hospitality in this state is huge, and we need to trickle down to the school. It's a matter of respect and perception. If hospitality skills were taught in schools, working as a team, smiling, dressing well, communication, it's a socialization level and these are skills that could transfer to any career
- Three "Ts", trade, technology, and tourism